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R E M A R K S
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DR. BALGUY'S SERMON, K
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A T T H E C O N S E C R A T I O N O F T H E
B I S H O P S O F L I C H F I E L D A N D C O V E N T R Y,
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I N A
L E T T E R T O T H A T G E N T L E M A N.

" I am far from wishing to discourage the Clergy of the estab-
" lished Church from thinking for themselves, or from speak-
" ing what they think; not even from writing, where the
" importance of the occasion may seem to demand it, and
" where no weightier reason forbids it.

DR. BALGUY'S Sermon, p. 12.

BY A PETITIONING CLERGYMAN.

L O N D O N;

Printed for J. JOHNSON. at No. 72, in St. Paul's
Church Yard.

M D C C L X X V.

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REMARKS, &c.

REV. SIR,

THERE should seem to be little temptation to argue with you the subject matter of your late consecration Sermon. The several very ingenious and masterly answers which were made to certain reprehensible doctrines which you advanced on two former occasions, remain not only unconfuted, but unnoticed. A candid and impartial judge would necessarily enquire after either your defence or recantation. In neither of which however can he be satisfied.

Still less temptation is there to argue the merits of the question, with any prospect to practical good in our own day.—You scruple not to avow that both the platform and superstructure of our church, is not only impregnable, as it respects the power

of its retainers, but also as it regards the soundness of its system. And this carries the more discouraging appearance, because your doctrines are handed into public, not under the sanction of a solicited, or unwilling patron, but *published by order of the archbishop*,

Under these discouragements, this public address may carry with it the air of forwardness or presumption. In my own private opinion it partaketh neither of the one nor the other. Nor am I ambitious of your correspondence, further than the confutation or establishment of your principles may require.

However certain *great* men may be disposed to discountenance the removal of all impediments to the free establishment of the word of truth, it is the duty of all honest men to enquire after it, wheresoever it may be found. And as I cannot but consider every individual of this empire as equally concerned, in common with the greatest ecclesiastic, in all matters which affect the national religion; so from that principle, and that only, I trouble myself with any public examination and reprehension

hension of the doctrines advanced in your late extraordinary Sermon.

Satisfied also in that cause, in which I now use my pen, the cause of much injured liberty—just and equal liberty—I shall proceed without excuse in its defence. Had my opinions run in the same track with yours; or had your arguments made me a convert in my principles, you should not have heard from me, without receiving an acknowledgment of your services.— But the case is far otherwise. And I rest my justification with others, on the force of what I have to say in opposition to that system which I consider as pregnant with the greatest danger to the church of Christ, and involving in it the existence of all the reformed churches in Christendom.

The *submission of ourselves to every ordinance of men for the Lord's sake*, must ever be considered with these two limitations; first, that such ordinance of man be not claimed or exercised where all authority of men is precluded; and secondly, that such ordinance be not, in any wise contradictory to the positive, or by plain consequence, the ordinance of God.

Under

Under these limitations, I could readily have joined issue with you, but we differ in our very premises, since these conditions are an essential requisite to my obedience, and which do not appear to make any previous constituent part of yours. And further, these conditions must be equally understood to affect the *extent* of the precept of your text, as well as the *particular*, and more immediate *view* with which it was written. Equally also involved in these conditions, is the vague and solitary, but bold assertion that *subjection to authority is the invariable duty of a christian* *.

The hasty and unnatural alliance which you make between the civil and ecclesiastical authority, may indeed well suit with the consequences intended to be drawn from thence; but a simple assertion will not be readily received on the bare credit of Dr. Balguy, at least by those whose doubts are not entirely satisfied by an elaborate treatise from the pen of a certain learned prelate now living. Doubtless, there may be supposed some men yet left among us, who are not so warped in their accom-

* Sermon, p. 4.

accommodation to the times, as to suppose the injunction in the text extended equally, without limitation, to ordinances *ecclesiastical and civil*; and who, so far from agreeing with you in what you consider as little short of self-evident, that *the reason is the same in all*, that they readily obey the one, and as heartily reprobate the other.

All matters relating to christian faith and practice are fully laid down in the christian scriptures. These are the infallible guides, and the only statute books of a christian. Nor can you, Sir, who profess yourself a disciple of one common master, with myself, refer me to other authority, however we may differ in the interpretation of them.

The case of an *heathen* emperor being the head of a *national* church, and from your own confession, “*having no right to prescribe to those who separate themselves from it* is readily acquiesced in. *These last, (i. e. the separatists, say you) were subject to him in civil affairs only; in matters of religion they had other guides, to whose authority they were bound to submit.**” Here, Sir,
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* Sermon, p. 4.

you discriminate, and yet are not backward to give that intolerance to the *christian* magistrate, which you justly deny to the *beathen*. This surely is charging upon christianity what of right belongs not to it. I would argue, that the gospel of Christ is clear and positive in circumscribing the authority of the civil magistrate, and asserting the supreme and exclusive authority of Christ alone in all the concerns of religion, wherein *civil government* is not affected. But I may save all trouble on this score, and content myself with what will every way as well serve my purpose, so far as you are concerned, by reminding you that the archdeacon of Winchester did assure the archbishop and certain other brethren assembled in the chapel at Lambeth, on a former similar occasion, that *men consulted scripture, for what was not to be found in it, an accurate description of their rights and duties* *. And for the rest, whom it may concern, I hope they need not to be told, or desired always to keep in mind, that the New Testament

* Sermon at consecration of the bishop Shipley, p. 4.

is most friendly to the religious rights and liberties of mankind.

Besides, the proposed unlimited submission to the magistrate, in whom may be united the civil and ecclesiastical power, is in itself, in the manner maintained by you, equally applicable to any person, or place, provided such magistrate is but once seated in the chair of authority. I do not mean to rest much upon the argument, that therefore popery is maintainable on the same principle, because, was the principle right, I should be more contented with its consequences ; — but, I will freely own myself sensibly hurt, when I find a dignitary of a reformed protestant church, boldly advancing, in the presence of certain fathers of that church, and in some measure countenanced by them, principles diametrically repugnant to that Reformation in which we justly make our boast, and entirely abhorrent to every principle upon which it can be defended.

One very remarkable concession, and which appears to have been dropped as a saving of credit, shall have its full force in protecting you from the conclusions of

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the foregoing reasoning. It is indeed the thread, by which spare guide I discover the glimmerings of your *protestantism*, when I contemplate the reformation; and by which also I am forbidden seriously to question your *loyalty*, when I come down to the latter immortal period of time, the revolution. This concession, on which I may be pardoned in dwelling somewhat more than ordinary, is expressed in the following words; “ *We can then only be released from subjection, when we see and feel, that the abuse of authority destroys the very end for which it was given. Till this extreme case happen, both minister and people, in either society, will find their respective duties very plainly marked out **.”

And now, Sir, in return for all you can gain to yourself, by this seasonable qualification of your hypothesis, it appears to me, as if your *cause* was in the same proportion a loser, not only in the consequences deducible from it, but by the apparent first and simple meaning of your words.

You, indeed, might not either *see* or *feel* the abuse of authority, and in order to let
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pass your plural pronoun, without what you might call a cavil; I will suppose that even your auditors do neither *see*, nor *feel* any abuse of authority, and therefore will most readily, on this presumption, excuse your shewing no desire or inclination for its removal.

But *you* and *they* do not count for more than you will collectively number. There are others, who from looking through a different medium, and from more sensibility, both *see* and *feel* what they did and do loudly complain of.—My own knowledge will allow me to speak positively as to this fact, and I trust your candor, nay even *your* knowledge will confirm you in the belief, that there are many such among the sons of the church of England.

If then, under these circumstances of *seeing* and *feeling*, *we* are released from our subjection, much more were we intitled to a patient hearing and decent treatment. And it may not be useless to apprise you, that the adroitness of an advocate, equal to yourself, may one day be wanted to excuse that inattention to these things, which confessedly, to say the least, has distin-

guished those whose duty it was to have lent an attentive ear, and to have helped forward the prayer of our petition.

But I am not here to be understood as resting the defence of the petitioners on the reasoning from your concession. The right of professing the sufficiency of the holy scriptures, is defensible from those very scriptures themselves,—defensible also on the foundation principle of our established church; and besides the right thus inherent in the Petitioners as Christians, as members of the Church of England, it became also their duty. Their allegiance to Christ, and their affection for our national church, demanded at their hands that noble and disinterested, that Christian and Protestant stand, in behalf of themselves and others, which they have generously made.

With something, very like the air of reproof, or insult, or a mixture of both, we are told, that *it should never be forgotten by ministers, that they are subject to higher authority. They are to execute law, not to make it* *. Most true is this doctrine, how-

* Sermon, p. 6.

ever unhappily expressed ; unhappily, because you seem thereby to endeavour to lead your auditors, and also your readers to overlook the best sense, of which the words themselves are capable.—All ministers of the gospel of Christ should and do allow and acknowledge one Lord and one master Jesus Christ. They should acknowledge his authority not in word only, but in deed, — by living and preaching in obedience to it. They are to preach the unsearchable riches of Christ crucified, and not to assume to themselves the power arrogated by some, of pardon and absolution ; this would indeed be *to make the law, and not to execute it.*

Not so, however, means the preacher ; you, Sir, seem to fix your eye on *human* authority, and *human* laws ; — acts of parliament and the book of Canons appear your dernier resort. But it has before been insisted, that these are only a secondary authority, in cases wherein good citizenship is not concerned, — except indeed with those who invert the apostle's rule, and obey man, rather than God.

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It is indeed, Sir, a melancholy truth which you tell us respecting the conduct of some, who *professing the greatest abhorrence of popery*, have yet made *pretensions scarce less arrogant than those of Rome itself**. — We have even heard of one, whose outrageous zeal has gone beyond these, and who, tho' amply beneficed in a protestant church, declared, after mature consideration, and not in an hasty gust of passion, or pique, that he *meant to defend not only Popery, but Paganism itself*. I mean, said he, *to defend every established religion under Heaven*†.

The gentle reproof which you administer to those like-minded protestants with yourself, for giving the superiority to the church in preference to the state, appears but as the copy of your countenance, and was brought into view *only*, the better ultimately to reduce the concerns of religion equally within the jurisdiction of the civil magistrate, as the immediate and proper concerns of the state. In this view, however, it fails, and indeed can, at the most,

* Ib. p. 7.

† Archdeacon Balguy's Charge, 1772. p. 7.

amount to no more than a discovery of your good inclination. But let me ask you, Sir, how thoroughly soever, I may reprobate the doctrine of the supremacy, or independency of the church, what do you mean when you use the expression of *church and state*, or talk of causes *ecclesiastical and civil*? These seem to look the same way, however carelessly they may be used, tho' I yet know some very tenacious of this order of the words, and I question whether you would not mark and report that man a delinquent, who should so far innovate upon custom as to transpose them.

The argument which you next offer is addressed *ad homines*. If we are not at liberty, you say, to execute the trust reposed in us, we are surely at liberty to lay it down*.—This, Sir, is beginning upon a tender subject to many worthy and excellent ministers in our establishment, and it would have been more worthy of your advanced station to have moved slowly and fairly; to have calmed the troubled spirit, rather than to have insulted the distressed minds

* Sermon, p. 8.

of some of your brethren. The alternative is not only a cruel one, but also one by no means so universally agreed in as you may be pleased to suppose. Many do not think themselves any more at liberty by the laws of God, than they are by the laws of the land, to renounce their ministry, or to quit their present stations. And this being no new case, you ought not only to have been more cautious in what you advanced, but have accompanied it, if possible, with satisfactory and conclusive reasons.

Many there are among our brethren, valuable, worthy, and no wit less conscientious than others their fellows, who refuse to proceed forward in their advancement, but who cannot satisfy themselves in relinquishing their engagement to our national church, seeing the principle of that church is no other than the principle of their ideal earthly Jerusalem. And who further in conscience think it their duty to continue in her membership and ministry, and labour therein for her amendment.—These men, not less useful in their generation, content themselves in that liberty which even Dr. Balguy allows them
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*in the thinking for themselves, speaking what they think, and even writing, where the importance of the occasion may seem to demand it, and no weightier reason forbids it.**

With respect to the criminality of breaking through the most solemn engagements, † pointed, without doubt, at the declaration of conformity, it may deserve to be remarked, that a submission to the penalties of disobedience, have by some been considered as equivalent to the discharge of the engagement. The weight of this argument depends upon its influence on the minds of each, and with those concerned it must be left; but it should be here noted, that you seem little apprised of the general desertion in the business of conformity, not from what is usual in the present practice, but from the express letter of our ecclesiastical law.

Now, Sir, with regard to the harmony between the pulpit, and the reading desk, I am for a moment left to admire the latitude you allow, tho' the whole amounts not to the value of a sugar plumb. You conceive we are not obliged, in our discourses

* Sermon, p. 12.

† Ib. p. 8.

from the pulpit, either to explain or defend every particular doctrine set forth in the articles of religion *. But before you have proceeded many paces onward, you do assure us, that *every word that comes from our mouths in opposition to the established faith, is a violation of the most solemn engagements, and an act of disobedience to lawful authority* †. On the contrary, it should seem most plain to me, that if I have any comfort in the non-obligation to *defend*, that comfort must arise from the doubts which I entertain about the truth of *such some* doctrines. But then, if only mere silence is allowed me, the establishment must look forward to little improvement in the confessedly acknowledged imperfections of it, while the ministers thereof are precluded from uttering one syllable that shall lead to amendment.

But the question of the hardest solution, and of main importance in this place, is, what particular doctrines are those, respecting which this liberty is allowed? And which, by the bye, is a secondary and dependent question on the previous one, who

* Ib. p. 10.

† Ib.

can authoritatively give the answer?—The mysteries of Calvin may be as difficult of digestion to Dr. Balguy, as those of Athanasius to the followers of Arius or Socinus; yet, nevertheless, for any thing that appears to the contrary, the one is as much imposed and enjoined as the other, and Dr. Balguy cannot, of right, take to himself more liberty herein than any other of his brethren, and what then becomes of *solemn engagements and disobedience to lawful authority*. Indeed I cannot see how you can, on your own plan, even go so far as to acknowledge, that *some things are to be found in our liturgy capable of amendment* *, without verging towards *a violation of the afore-said most solemn engagements, and an act of disobedience to lawful authority*.

Whatever your present case may require, it is not *my* business to reconcile your contradictions; it is sufficient for me, if you can satisfy yourself in them. I covet not your casuistry, and as I cannot be convinced by it, you must be contented with a compliment on the acuteness, instead of the solidity of your argument; and I am

* Sermon, p. 9.

thankful that your sophistry is yet so open to detection, as not to endanger the infection of ingenuous minds.

The very great drawback which you make from the glory of our national church, by an assertion directly repugnant to her first principle, seems, in my estimation, a crime of such a magnitude, as to deserve reprehension in somewhat smarter language than I am inclined to give you. But some gentlemen who engage in the drudgery of an indiscriminate or universal defence of an human establishment, are even countenanced in having a fling at the brightest jewel in our ecclesiastical system. Those who are gifted with foresight, and speculate upon the late run of church defences, are not backward to pronounce upon the necessity there may one day be for every assistance. But, some poisons, tho' more slow in their operations, are not, therefore, say the church chymists, the less certain to take effect.

We are next confidently assured, that *they who make a man a preacher, neither require, nor authorize him to preach any other doctrine than is agreeable to the institutions of*
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the established church *. It may be so, but this is on the presumption that all the doctrines of the church are agreeable to the word of God.

Let me here engage in my service the sixth article, and one of the questions put to the preacher at his ordination to the priesthood. That question to which I refer is the following. "Are you," asks the bishop, "persuaded, that the holy scriptures contain sufficiently all doctrine required of necessity for eternal salvation through faith in Jesus Christ? And are you determined, out of the said scriptures, to instruct the people committed to your charge, and to teach nothing, as required of necessity to eternal salvation, but that which you shall be persuaded, may be concluded and proved by the scripture?"—The sixth article speaks to the same effect, and almost in the same words,—“ holy scripture containeth all things necessary to salvation : so that whatsoever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man, that it should be believed

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* *Ib.* p. 11.

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* *Ib.* p. 11.

“ as an article of the faith, or be thought
 “ requisite or necessary to salvation.”

These references, Sir, should seem to me to be of full as high authority as the *ipse dixit* of Dr. Balguy, however dignified or distinguished; and need I to say that herein our church, even as by law established, is made to speak a very different language in your late sermon. You lay down and circumscribe the boundary of the preacher, and tie him with cords tighter than doth the church herself. You have once allowed that he is not obliged to defend *every* doctrine of the church, but this liberty you again cloged and destroyed by subsequent qualifications; and as appears to me, intended ultimately to leave it open only where the shoe may pinch the most in a few nameless particulars, not to be used as occasion might require, but according to the will and good liking, or the practice of *others*. On the contrary, the church leaves the scriptures, the ultimate test of orthodoxy, and if an individual can satisfy himself in his subscription, I do think him at liberty to preach, or otherwise promote the truth to the best of his under-

understanding and ability, according to what he shall find to be the word of God.

When you come to allow it to be the duty of a minister, as of every other man, to set himself in opposition to doctrines in a national church, which he may suppose are notoriously false and impious, or which should appear destructive to the cause of religion and virtue, you fail not immediately to eject him, even before you allow him the poor privilege of complaint,—*He must, say you, first cease to be a minister in that society where such corruptions prevail**.—And when you have thus lent your hand, and conducted him without the pale of your church, it is no difficult task to anticipate your renouncing all concern with him by denying him fellowship with you. The blessedness of such is readily left by some churchmen, tho' with little cause of exultation, as its own reward. And while some may glory in persecution, there are not wanting others who rejoice in being instrumental in the distress of their brother.

But, after all, what is now become of your former confession, that he was *not* obliged

* Sermon, p. II.

obliged to defend *every* doctrine. And if there should be any doctrines in such national church either *notoriously false*, or *impious*, or *destructive of the cause of religion and virtue*, it may be presumed, that it would be the last thing in his thoughts to *defend such*, and more particularly, when so adroit a churchman as yourself had before despatched with the necessity, and declared against any expectation of buckling on his armour in defence of them.

In the same page (p. 11.) you proceed with such reasoning as is only worthy of being turned against yourself; after you have insisted that such person *must cease to be a minister in that society where such corruptions prevail*, you argue, *for he cannot in honor accept emoluments and rewards from the same church, which he is determined to oppose. If he will act either consistently or honestly, he must resign his office, or obey his superiors.*

In answer to all this sporting with the consciences and conduct of the ministers of our national church, I will here only produce your own authority, as before stated, tho' indeed it amounts to very little, save the

tation. I have but these ends in view, the cause of injured truth, and injured liberty; and my greatest ambition is to be an instrument, in however inferior a degree, in the service of the church of Christ, and shall to that end willingly labor to reduce the Protestant reformed church of England, to be one with the gospel church of Christ, its acknowledged Head and Master.

A regular and solemn appointment to the ministry contributes so much to decency and good order, that it is justly defensible on that score only. Some acquirements are necessarily requisite; and a good and an holy life indispensable. Of the *mode* of this appointment, I confess myself less solicitous; and therefore, as it gives offence, I regret that our church requires re-ordination from one, who has only been lain hands on by the presbytry, while the convert from popery is received with open arms, and admitted; *ad eundem*, without question or debate.

Most cordially do I agree with you, that the *people are not obliged to submit implicitly to the instructions of their teachers, for human*

*man teachers may err**; and by the bye, in exactly the same predicament stand *human injunctions* as well as *human instructions*, whether they originate from congregated synods, or individual teachers. But it should seem, from what has been dropped from the pens of some advocates, that the ministers being circumscribed in their teachings, should lead to the circumscribing the creeds of the hearers,—or to what end confine the fountain, and leave the stream to diffuse itself abroad. This indeed is an argument against the *utility* of certain dogmas, but it goes no farther. However, be all this as it may, I would rather see a fellow christian from principle and conscience, which will always suppose enquiry, profess himself in what I judge to be an error, than hear him declare his assent to my own creed, on an implicit obedience and faith in me.

The subsequent consideration which you take (p. 14.) as a caveat against the passing of conclusions unfavourable to the church of England, stands rather as a protest against any inimical designs in yourself,

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* Sermon, p. 13.

than as a satisfactory defence of the necessary consequences of your principles. On a former occasion you gave a very solemn assurance of your intentional defence of every religion under heaven. Some reproaches of your mind, the consequences of after-thoughts, have led you here to renounce the protection of popery, with which you had before taken the right hand of fellowship, and walked in brotherly love. To say the truth, I yet suspect your conversion to the true protestant faith; and if at the same time you are to be credited in your renunciation of the principles of popery, you are left between two stools, possibly you may not yet be fully persuaded in your own mind, and if so,---I leave you to your own judgment.

The further difficulty, and which is of the more serious nature, is, the consequence of your giving up the defence of popery. For you now think fit to tell us, what is very different from your former language, that nothing was *meant* to justify protestants joining in the sacrifice of the mass, in the worship of images, in a blind subjection to the decrees of the pope.

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When these extreme cases happen, say you, we are to obey the evangelical precept, come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues *. Here we must revert to the grand question, who is to be the judge of these and other like *extreme cases*, but the individual affected by them? And yet it is far from certain, that every individual protestant will agree with Dr. Balguy in what is *impiety* and *idolatry*. A very respectable body of protestants have dissented, and do dissent from the church of England, *without* having charged her either with *impiety* or *idolatry*, tho' they think her not free from every spot or wrinkle; and who consider what you look upon as *smaller improprieties and unimportant mistakes*, as ample justification of their separation. And surely these good men are not to be condemned. Their consciences are not to be measured by the same standard with Dr. Balguy's, nor does it thence follow that he is right, and they are wrong.

* Sermon, p. 14.

So likewise with respect to the *evangelical precept*, each individual must abound in his own sense. Some who have separated themselves from the national church, you condemn as having grounded their separation on *smaller improprieties* and *unimportant mistakes*; and there are others whom you condemn for continuing in church membership, but you are not their judge, and to their own master they stand or fall. And it is neither by the allurements of one sort of men, nor the insults of another, that a reasonable man is to be directed.

You proceed, Sir, to pour forth your lamentations over the dire effects of *religious divisions*, as having produced much mischief in the world, and likely to produce much more*. All is granted you in its fullest extent, so far as concerns the days that are past;—but since the power of the church is every where declining, and the clergy not held in superstitious veneration, it is not only to be hoped, but to be expected, that such mischiefs as have heretofore abounded, and covered the world

* Sermon, p. 14.

with deluges of blood, will be no more repeated, even the *odium theologicum* is but the child of human impositions in matters of faith and doctrine, and when the establishment shall confine itself to its original platform, and mutual toleration shall be allowed by the municipal law, we shall mutually feel the full force of the spirit of the gospel, in all our debates on questions which concern religion. Controversy will then be the infallible means of discovering the truth, and each disputant will candidly argue with that freedom and temper, which will bring the debate to a speedy issue, and crown the laudable endeavours of both with success.

The opposite extreme, and with which your sermon appears to me to be pregnant, is the more probable, and therefore the more to be dreaded mischief. What think you, reverend Sir, of an universal uniformity of *profession*,—for of *belief* it is impossible, so long as this world remains. When from worldly mindedness all religious principle and sincerity will be lost. This is the prospect before us; for this do modern infidels honestly, and papists consistently

sistently argue. And for this also does Dr. Thomas Balguy labor; your honesty, Sir, I have no right to question, but your consistency is lighter than chaff before the wind, or air itself.

The arguments you urge in favour of social religion, are only such as press for acquiescence in the present public liturgy. But indeed all you have offered appears to be composed of such convertible materials, as to apply powerfully against your own hypothesis. *All we can do*, you say, *speaking of the people, is to join in communion with those who differ from us least* *. But if this is so clear a duty in the people, doth it not presuppose as clear a duty in the governors, to make that communion as open as christian worship will admit? Doth it not argue strongly for as general a form of sound words, as christian charity demands, and as human wit can devise? Doth it not entirely exclude a long chain of particular and unessential doctrinal articles from being either expressed or conceived in the forms of public worship? Doth it not plead for the removal of vain repetitions—the cor-
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* Sermon, p. 15.

rection of inaccuracies, and the modernizing of obsolete words? — If these are truths, and to me they are incontrovertible ones, and are immediately deducible from your premises, the turn of your future pleadings and labors should consistently be directed the same way.

Again, when at the bottom of the same page (15) you insist, that *it cannot then be a reason for dissenting from a national church, that many things, as appears to us, may be changed for the better*, you are putting a very conclusive answer into the mouths of those against whom, by implication, you aimed the sarcasm.

The protestant dissenters are well able to justify their own dissent, and it would be forward in me to take the work out of their hands. But it is well understood, that your pointed aim is against those who continue in the church, and yet wish her human formularies of faith removed, and her public liturgy and offices amended. That body of men, ostensible to you, under the name of petitioners, only concerned themselves with the imposition of assent. With the amendment of the litur-

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gy, or the truth or falsehood of the doctrines of the articles, they did not concern themselves. Therefore I would not be understood to involve them in the group of those who look further, tho' I will readily own myself one of both classes.

If then, Sir, you do not allow certain persons to be justified in their dissent, because they think *many things might be changed for the better*, it is to be hoped you will look down with a more favorable eye upon those who, taking the cue, should continue in their present stations. Arguments conclusive may satisfy the continuers, I avow myself to be one; but I am at full liberty to play your little assortment of ordnance against yourself, when it so very obviously makes against you.

That paragraph which occupies the two last pages of your sermon, must be assigned over to the dissenters, as they *alone* are directly concerned in it. In the mean time it deserves observation, that it is very uncharitable to pronounce so unfavorably on their motives, as indiscriminately to say, that they dissent *for no other reason, than*
because

because they (i. e. rules of expedience) are prescribed by authority.

It is further remarkable, that your progressive argumentation to the sovereign authority would have been equally conclusive if carried onward to the pope, because you are satisfied, that *authority once established, must be obeyed.* And the avowed renunciation of all connection between the *outward form of our national church, and the invisible kingdom of Christ*, is an entire giving up the merits of the question in dispute, and must be considered as a departure from the field, after a feeble and ineffectual defence, acknowledging the just cause of battle to be in the hands of your adversaries ; and also as an ample acknowledgment of the victory of scripture, reason and argument, over the powers of this world, and the sophistry of their advocates.

Most heartily do I join with you in your concluding prayer, and with that, in perfect charity I shall take my leave of you.

“ *May*

“ May we all of us be careful to discharge our respective duties, to the honor of God, the increase of true religion, and the salvation of our own souls! And may we never want the assistance of God’s holy spirit to strengthen and support our weak endeavours.”

I am,

Rev. SIR,

Yours, &c.



This Day is Published, Price 1s. 6 d.

A SHORT VIEW of the CONTROVERSY, occasioned by the Confessional and the Petition to Parliament, for Relief in the Matter of Subscription to the Articles and Liturgy of the Church of England.

Printed for J. JOHNSON, St. Paul’s Church Yard.

